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THEATRE WORLD

9D.

JOHN GIELGUD as Macbeth

Picture by Anthony

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THEATRE WORLD

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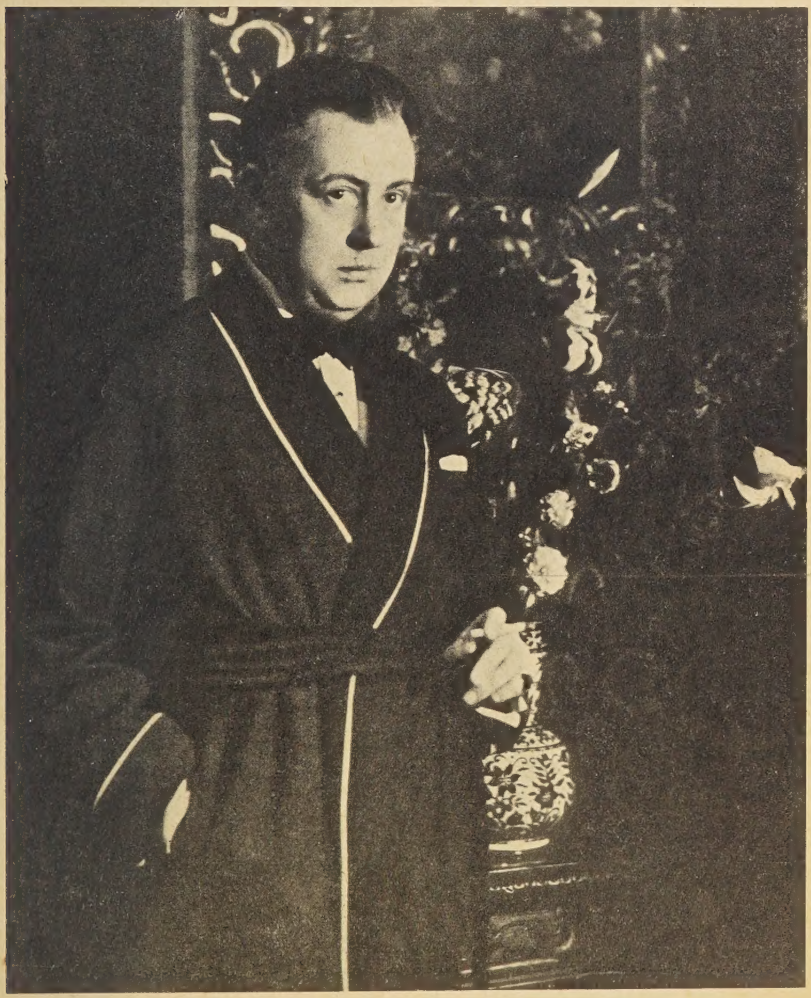

Tunbridge-Sedgwick

Raymond Lovell

who gives a superb performance as "Matthew," the sadistic intellectual in *Murder Without Crime*, at the Comedy Theatre. Air Gunner J. Lee Thompson's thriller has been hailed as the most subtly exciting to be seen for many years, and is playing to packed houses. Mr. Lovell's acting gives fresh proof of his remarkable versatility. Playgoers will recall his pathetic, shabby old doctor in *Jupiter Laughs*, and among his recent film successes have been "King George III" in *The Young Mr. Pitt*, the crystal gazer in *Alibi* and the Gestapo chief in *Uncensored*.

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Theatre World

(Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL)

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No. 212

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September, 1942

AS we view with distaste the lengthening hours of darkness and the coming of the many attendant discomforts of the blackout, the question arises,' will the theatres in London be able to maintain their present flourishing state? One of the chief problems to consider is that of transport, which is even more restricted this year, and it seems inevitable that the theatres will eventually be forced back on the matinees only basis, with perhaps one or two staggered evening performances each week.

Meantime there seems no slowing up in the number of new shows planned for presentation in the West End. We have now definitely entered upon the era of war plays, after fighting shy of them for over two years. *Men in Shadow*, which, promising many thrills, concerns the adventures of some British airmen shot down over France, who organise secretly an underground movement with a number of French patriots, is being presented shortly in the West End by "Bill" Linnit and Jack Dunfee. John Mills (now invalided out of the army) is the star, and his wife, Mary Hayley Bell, is the authoress. "Bill" Linnit and Jack Dunfee are also presenting *Thousands of Summers*, which concerns the wives of some of our Fighter pilots during the Battle of Britain, and this play too will be coming to London shortly. *Escort*, by Sir Patrick Hastings, produced at the Lyric too late for review in this issue, is another war play, which it must be confessed fails to grip until the last act, when, however, brilliant acting from Michael Shepley, John Stuart, Barry Morse and others, and some terrifyingly realistic impressions of war at sea (including a complete stage that rolls like a ship) help to make amends.

Over the Footlights

ON the other side of the dramatic scale are two revivals; one, *Home and Beauty*, Somerset Maugham's wittiest comedy, presented by Lee Ephraim and B. A. Meyer in conjunction with Tom Arnold, with Ronald Squire, Isabel Jeans, Barry Jones and Antony Holles in the cast. Val Gielgud produces, and the play, which opened at Wimbledon, will reach the West End after visits to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Bradford, Blackpool and Liverpool. The other is *Night of the Garter*, that uproarious Strand Theatre farce of ten years ago, which Firth Shephard is reviving at the same theatre on September 9th. Sydney Howard stars.

IT was good news that public demand brought back *Othello* to the New, where it will now play until the end of the current Old Vic season at this theatre, on September 12th. No theatregoer worth his salt will let this brilliant production pass without a visit. Frederick Valk continues to give his outstanding performance as the Moor, with Bernard Miles as Iago, Hermione Hannen as Desdemona and Freda Jackson Emilia. Other Shakespeare news is that Donald Wolfit has already begun his autumn tour, which will include a production of *King Lear*, with Mr. Wolfit in the title role for the first time in his career. Ernest Stern (who was Rheinhardt's leading designer for many years) has designed an inspiring permanent set for this play, and also for *Twelfth Night*, which will be included. *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will also be presented, and it is hoped to include all these plays, as well as *The Romance of David Garrick*, when Mr. Wolfit comes to a West End theatre for a London season at the end of the year. F.S.

Wherever smoking is permitted—ABDULLAS FOR CHOICE

New Shows of the Month

"Light and Shade"

(Ambassadors, July 29th)

SINCE Mr. Farjeon's new revue was produced on July 29th, changes have been made in the programme, and these no doubt have done a lot to pep things up, particularly the inclusion of Joyce Grenfell, whose two new character sketches "Situation Vacant" and "Cardboard Figures" are from all accounts well up to her usual very high standard.

As originally produced it must be admitted the revue was not so swift moving as one had hoped, but for all that it bears the Farjeon mark, and a Farjeon revue is always worth a visit. Also always worth seeing is Betty Ann Davies. Whatever she does, serious or farcical, Miss Davies is outstanding and has long deserved the reputation of being one of our most brilliant revue actresses. There is excellent work too from Vida Hope, Megs Jenkins, Joan Sterndale Bennett, Joanna Horder, Max Adrian, Frith Banbury, Geoffrey Dunn and others in the cast.

The programme has variety, and includes some amusing skits, topical and otherwise. "Masque of Ariel," which finishes the first half, is as its name implies a commentary on broadcasting, and "Queue" (Betty Ann Davies) and "Trial Blackout," also speak for themselves. The book and lyrics are by Herbert Farjeon with assistance from Eleanor Farjeon; music by Clifton Parker and others, and décor by Joseph Carl.

L.J.

(Left):

MARY CLARE

presents a fearsome aspect as the notorious Ma Grisson in George Black's presentation of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* at the Prince of Wales Theatre.

"No Orchids for Miss Blandish"

(Prince of Wales, July 30th)

TO all who are going to this production with a load of *partis pris, arrière-pensées* and other forms of prejudice that sound better in French—warning! Robert Nesbitt's staging of Miss Blandish, Alexander Marsh's production of it, and the slick work of an outstanding cast, extract the very best from this strange new stage material. Thanks to the revolving stage we waste no time in switching over from hideout to dive, from dive to barn, from barn to police headquarters, thence to bar, bedchamber, boudoir and sinister clubroom; and thanks to faithful reproduction of James Hadley Chase's conception of racketeering customs we have no wasted verbiage. Actions here speak louder, and more often, than words. Hoodlums, yeggs, degenerates, snatchers, busters, rummies, wise-guys—and the glamorous stenog. with a loose-slung jawbone—say their short pieces and put across their ruthless stuff with no refinements of preamble or afterthought. Dave Fenner, crime reporter, played by Hartley Power, is a joy—one spot of near-virtue in this naughty world; as near, that is, as his profession allows him to be.

Slim Grisson (Robert Newton) goes down on the programme as "vicious as a black mamba, a degenerate, homicidal, imbecile"—and you have only to look at him to realise he's all of that. Jack Lester's Eddie Schultz and Mary Clare's Ma Grisson evoke just the right degree of despair in an audience who would fain think the best of even the lowest types. And Miss Blandish (Linden Travers), whose clothes are wonderful—yes, she does at one stage look like the book cover—is quite relentlessly and uncompromisingly ill-treated from Scene One to Scene Ten; you wonder at her keeping that lovely shape.

Naturally you'll not be edified, though a preliminary exhortation reminds you of the play's moral purpose; but if you are not by

ADRIANNE ALLEN

who gives a brilliant performance as the Cockney wife of a Polish Count in Terence Rattigan's new and successful play *Flare Path*, which is reviewed overleaf.

turns horrified, revolted, terrified and intrigued, a good production has been wasted on you.

E.H.

"Murder Without Crime"

(*Comedy, July 31st*)

SUCCESSFUL stage thrillers are not easily come by; which makes it remarkable that this first play by J. Lee Thompson should have made such an instantaneous appeal in the West End. The author has however hit upon the golden rule for this type of theatre piece; and that is to keep the suspense going right up to curtain fall.

There are only four characters in the play, and most of the action passes between two of them, Stephen and Matthew.

These two men could scarcely be called attractive: they are of the type that once passed totally ineffectual lives in and out of the West End; now mercifully banished, or anyway pushed into the background, by the stern realities of war. Yet these two characters have a fascination that lasts right through the three acts, and around them is gathered an atmosphere of tense emotion and suspense that only clever writing and brilliant acting could achieve.

It would not be fair to reveal the ingenious story of this wholly satisfying thriller. Sufficient to say there is a body in the ottoman; Stephen's night-club-hostess mistress has disappeared, and Matthew, sadistic landlord of Stephen's luxurious flat, knows a great deal. All this happens on the night Stephen's unsuspecting wife elects to return to him after a long separation, so that his mental anguish (enhanced by Matthew's refinement of psychological torture) is easily imagined. How it all ends is not revealed until the last five minutes of the play.

Peter Croft as Stephen and Raymond Lovell as Matthew give outstanding performances; the former's playing of an exacting emotional role marking him down as a young actor of great dramatic promise, and the latter's vividly contrasted exposition of cold and calculated hatred is no less effective. Joyce Heron as Grena, the night club hostess, and Margaret Johnston as Jan, Stephen's wife, are also excellent, and a word must go to Elizabeth Agombar for a striking setting for the play, and to the direction of Henry Cass.

It looks as though this play is all set for a long run, and certainly provides yet another way of forgetting for a few hours the grimness of the outside world.

F.S.

John Vickers

"Wild Rose"

(*Princes, August 6th*)

THE Cinderella plot has many facets, nearly all acceptable in a tough world, and Cinderella Sally's story emerges as one of the most charming of them all.

Wild Rose is the *Sally* of 1921 redressed and glorified into a wholly delightful production, in which Edwardian romance, colour, tunefulness and spectacle are built around an unusually lucid story for musical comedy, with the happiest of results.

The scene is New York in the early 1900's (surely the one really peaceful period of a troubled century). We are taken from the kitchen quarters and garden of Nikko's downtown restaurant, via Jim Brady's mammoth party in the Waldorf Astoria and the stage and backstage at the Sixth Avenue Theatre to the Little Church around the Corner, in a whirlwind pursuit of the success story of Sally, the little kitchen maid who makes good.

En route we meet lovable Maxie, one of Nikko's waiters and in reality a Serbian prince in exile, who befriends and encourages Sally; Jim Brady, the Diamond King, whose magnificent party is adorned by many celebrities of the time, including Lillian Russell, Colonel Cody and Victor Herbert, and Tom Blair, the Prince Charming of the piece, who, however, misunder-

stands Sally's desperate efforts to get a footing as a dancer right up to the last act. There are numerous other colourful personalities; Nikko, the restauranteur (Andrea Melandrinos), and Bridget, his wife (Winifred Davis); Gaston De Frey, a Theatrical Agent of great volubility (Andre Randall) and Rosy Roxie his vivacious secretary (Elsie Percival) and Janssen, the bibulous animal trainer, not forgetting Tarzan, the Chimpanzee. Add to these The Show Girls, The Dancing Girls, The Singing Girls and The Male Voices; the loveliest dresses and settings in the West End (the work of Frederick Dawson and Ernest Stern); Jerome Kern's nostalgic melodies, and a faultless production by Robert Nesbitt, and it is quite clear that this latest Firth Shephard show will run for a year.

Jessie Matthews is altogether delightful as the little dancer, Sally, and sings, acts and dances with undeniable grace and charm. Richard Hearne, once again in his "old man" make-up as Maxie, we could not have too much of; indeed we would have liked more in the vein of the brilliant acrobatic "passing out" ceremony! Jack Morrison is a most convincing Diamond King, and Linda Gray looks very lovely as Lillian Russell, whom we are privileged to see at closer quarters in a box with Jim Brady, during the performance which brings fame to Sally at the Sixth Avenue Theatre. Frank Leighton is a pleasing Tom Blair. The dances, arranged by Robert Helpmann and Ann Coventry, are delightful throughout. F.S.

(It is hoped to feature *Wild Rose* fully in pictures in our October issue.)

"Flare Path"

(*Apollo, August 13th*)

TERENCE RATTIGAN'S new play mirrors the tense lives of women who, married to members of air crews on active service, live their apparently normal lives in an understaffed hotel near the aerodrome, while listening with straining ears to every slight sound that may betoken the presence of aircraft. Three husbands and wives, who almost certainly would never have encountered one another in civilian life, hold the stage; they are Count and Countess Skriezevinsky, a Polish aristocrat, and a former barmaid of sterling character and an admirable façade of bonhomie and gaiety for all her heartache (Gerald Hinze and Adrianne Allen); Flight-Lieutenant Graham (Jack Watling), a loved and trusted leader whose nerve and spirit can hardly bear the responsibilities piled upon them, with his wife Patricia (Phyllis Calvert), who finds her greatest strength at the moment of his greatest weakness; and who makes a clean break with film star Peter Kyle (Martin Walker) whose selfish need of her love gives him an almost irresistible eloquence; the third pair are Sergeant Miller (Leslie Dwyer) and his mousey, literal-minded wife, whose solicitude for her gunner-husband's backaches is an embarrassment to everybody (Kathleen Harrison). Squadron-Leader Swanson (ably played by Ivan Samson) hovers round with fatherly concern, while the hotelkeeper, Mrs. Oakes, has a whale of a time keeping them all in order, comforting some with an astringent and practical type of sympathy and snubbing others with a satisfying thoroughness (Dora Gregory). Sounds of revelry from the bar and the naïvetés of Percy the waiter (George Cole), as well as Mrs. Miller's unexpected shafts of wit, relieve the anxiety which we share with the players on several counts: their anxiety when "operations" are suddenly ordered, the quiet grief of one wife whose husband fails to return, the dilemma of another wife who is loved and needed by two men of two different worlds.

The story is slight enough, however, and the happy ending, alas, all too improbable. Here are none of the loose ends that make so many lives an incomplete and ragged affair. All the better, I suppose, for the play's entertainment value. E.H.

The Arts Theatre

ON Wednesday, August 26th, the Arts Theatre Group presented a revival of G. K. Chesterton's *Magic*, for a three week's season. In the cast are Alec Clunes, Penelope Dudley Ward, Julian Randall, Graveley Edwards, Walter Hudd, Stanford Holme and Alan Blakelock. Alec Clunes is the producer and Rolf Gerard is responsible for the décor.

Noel Coward on Tour

THREE Coward plays, *Blithe Spirit* and two new ones, *Present Laughter* and *This Happy Breed*, under the title *Play Parade*, will go on a long tour commencing September 21st, with Noel Coward in the cast. Joyce Carey, Judy Campbell and Beryl Measor will also have principal parts.

The Adelphi Players

IN a recent issue the Adelphi players were referred to in our Amateur Stage section, which may have given a wrong impression that this company is of amateur status. Actually, of course, the Adelphi Players are a professional company who have been doing excellent work up and down the country. They have recently participated in the Holidays at Home for the Boroughs of Greenwich, Twickenham, Bury St. Edmunds, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield and the U.D.C. of Shipley. In addition they have played for the Friends of the Cathedral at Worcester, Wells and Ripon as well as many schools.

PICTURE BY JOHN VICKERS

Lady Macbeth: You must leave this.

Macbeth: Oh! Full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife.

The scene before the Banquet, in which Lady Macbeth, her ambitions so far fulfilled after Macbeth's murder of the King, tries to still her husband's growing remorse and fear—a fear that has already driven him to plan the murder of Banquo and Fleance.

JOHN GIELGUD and GWEN FERANGCON-DAVIES

"Macbeth"

ONE can always expect a Gielgud Shakespearean production to shed new light, on the highest artistic plane, for our leading actor-producer has a talent for re-interpreting without freakishness. His current presentation of *Macbeth* is no exception, and will indeed probably rank as his strongest piece of work. Moreover, in case playgoers may fight shy of Shakespeare's grimmest tragedy, let it be said that no production now running in the West End can offer greater suspense and excitement, or finer acting. Much too is owed to the striking décor by Michael Ayrton and John Minton and to William Walton's incidental music.

The play is presented by Tennent Plays Ltd., by arrangement with C.E.M.A

John Vickers

Left) :

st Witch : When shall we three meet again.
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

he opening scene, on the Blasted Heath. he Weird Sisters (*left to right*) are played y Dorothy Green, Ernest Thesiger and nnie Esmond, who make a terrifying trio.

Below, left) :

Duncan : Is execution done on Cawdor?

)uncan, King of Scotland (Nicholas lannen), with his two sons, Malcolm Emrys Jones), kneeling, and Donalbain John Shepherd), on right. News has come f the final overthrow of the rebel Thane f Cawdor, whose title the King bestows on ictorious Macbeth, as foretold by the witches.

Above, right) :

Lady Macbeth : Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised.
Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness. . . .

Lady Macbeth's ambitions are fired by Macbeth's letter, which tells of his encounter with the Witches and their strange prophesy that he should be Cawdor and King.

Right) :

Lady Macbeth : Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers :

Macbeth has murdered Duncan and is unnerved by his own dreadful deed. It is Lady Macbeth who takes the blood-stained daggers and places them beside Duncan's sleeping servants, smearing them with blood to fix their guilt.

Anthony

Anthony

Banquo: Give me my sword. Who's there?

The scene in the Courtyard just before the murder of Duncan. Banquo (Leon Quartermaine) with his son, Fleance (Michael Gainsborough), brings a gift and a message for Lady Macbeth from the unsuspecting King.

Porter: Here's a knocking indeed.

The Porter (George Woodbridge), whose noisy attempts to get dressed provide some welcome light moments.

John Vickers

Macbeth: You know your own degrees: sit down: at first
And last the hearty welcome.

Macbeth, now king, welcomes his guests to the banquet, but a short time after he has despatched the three Murderers to kill Banquo and his son.

John Vickers

Macbeth: Avaunt! and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!

John Gielgud's brilliant acting as the distraught Macbeth, Leon Quartermaine's grave and unearthly mien as Banquo's ghost, together with the superb stagecraft employed, make this a most memorable Banquet scene. The groupings are faultless, and the moment of Banquo's disappearance, illustrated above, something to be treasured in the memory for all time.

(*Left*) : I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er :

Macbeth, tormented after Banquo's ghostly appearance, determines to visit the Weird Sisters to discover his fate.

(*Below*) :
2*nd Witch* : By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes :—

Macbeth, visiting the witches in their Cavern, learns that "none of woman born shall harm Macbeth" and that he will never be vanquished until "Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him," both seeming impossibilities; but he finds strange answer to his fear that Banquo's son, Fleance, who escaped the assassins, will one day become king.

(*Left*)
Lady Macduff : Wisdom! to leave his wife to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles, in a place
From whence himself doth fly :

Lady Macduff (Thea Holme) with her son (David Baxter) learn from Ross (Abraham Sofaer) that her husband has fled to England to lead a rising against Macbeth

John Vickers

1st Murderer: Where is your husband?
Lady Macduff faces the Two Murderers (Tarver Penna and Brown Derby).

John Vickers

Macduff: What! all my pretty chickens and their dam at one fell swoop?
Macduff (Francis Lister) learns of Macbeth's latest and most horrible crime

PICTURE BY JOHN VICKERS

Lady Macbeth in the sleepwalking scene, when she reveals to the watching Doctor and Gentlewoman the guilt that weighs so heavily on her mind.

Right) :
Macbeth : Canst thou not
minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a
rooted sorrow?

Macbeth frenziedly prepares
for the coming battle with
Macduff, his mind still tor-
tured by the fate that
drives him on. *Right*, the
Doctor (A. Bromley Daven-
port).

Right) :
Messenger : (Alan Badel) : I
look'd towards Birnam,
and anon, methought
The wood began to move.

Fate overtakes Macbeth
when his enemies move
forward under cover of
branches torn from the
trees, but he fights bravely
till the last moment when,
face to face with Macduff,
he learns that he it is who
was "none of woman born."

Whispers from the Wings

BY LOOKER ON

PETER CROFT, starring in *Murder Without Crime* at the Comedy, has one of the most strenuous roles in the West End, for as Stephen he is on the stage during the whole progress of the play. Emotionally too the part must be a big strain. After the opening scene, indeed, almost from the rise of the curtain, his manner is pent up and strained almost to

PETER CROFT

son of Ann Croft, the well-known actress, as he appears as Stephen in *Murder Without Crime*, the clever thriller at the Comedy Theatre, which has registered an instantaneous success.

breaking point. No wonder the critics have warmly praised his playing of this exacting role.

It is interesting to recall that Peter Croft's first appearance on the stage was at the Comedy, in 1934, in Terence Rattigan's first play, *First Episode*, when he was understudying and playing a small part of an undergraduate. Now he is at the Comedy again, in another first play, and a successful one too, so this particular theatre will have an unusual significance for him. Since those early days Peter has been to Hollywood, where he acted as technical adviser on English details to the Fred Astaire film, *Gay Divorce*. Returning to this country he was with Gaumont British for two years, and acted in *A Yank at Oxford* and other films. Quite a varied career for a youngster of twenty-six.

With recollections of the sustained psychological duel which takes place between Stephen and Matthew in the play, it is most amusing to watch Peter Croft and Raymond Lovell ragging each other behind the scenes. They are great friends in real life.

Incidentally, *Murder Without Crime* represents another triumph for the enterprising Q Theatre, where the play was first produced.

* * *

ONE afternoon the other week I looked in to see Lupino Lane in his dressing room at the Victoria Palace, expecting to find him somewhat exhausted after the matinee, and at the prospect of another performance within the hour. But not so. It takes more than a mountain of work to get a Lupino down, and that has been true for three hundred years and more.

I caught Mr. Lane just at the right moment, just before the 250th performance of *Twenty to One*, and also full of many fascinating facts he has been gathering for his forthcoming book on his own famous theatrical family. The Lupinos came to London from Italy three centuries ago, and since then there has always been a Lupino on the English stage. The original Lupinos were members of a famous Italian family of puppet players, and when Cromwell frowned officially on the theatre a Lupino marionette show was allowed to function because they featured only religious subjects. Incidentally many out of work actors were employed to speak the lines, and when Charles II brought back the theatre to favour, this same puppet show was officially established at the royal theatre—Drury Lane.

LUPINO LANE as BILL SNIBSON

Early Lupino history of course is very much bound up with ballet dancing; in fact every Lupino to this day is a trained dancer. It was a Lupino who established a record for, I believe, no less than 210 pirouettes (Lupino Lane himself is no mean exponent of this art). With such a background it is easy to account for that inexhaustible supply of energy; he is a true Lupino, that is, if he doesn't go down in history by the name of Bill Snibson!

PICTURES BY TUNBRIDGE-SEDGWICK

Robert Helpmann as Choreographer

A STUDY OF "COMUS" AND "HAMLET"

by

Audrey Williamson

A striking picture of Robert Helpmann as Hamlet, which well illustrates the dancer's vivid power of expression.

IT has long been evident that in Robert Helpmann the English ballet has, apart from Massine, the outstanding dancer of our time. As classical dancer he has incomparable lyricism, grace and style, as partner a perfect tact and musicality, and as mime an astounding range from tragedy to farce. That potentially he is also a fine "straight" actor must be obvious to anyone who saw his Oberon, as well as his performances in such ballets as *Apparitions* and *The Wanderer*. The last few months have seen Helpmann develop as an artist in a new direction—choreography. His first ballet, *Comus*, created an immediate *furore;* his second, *Hamlet*, an equal popular success, is the centre of a critical controversy involving the entire scope and direction of ballet as an art.

Helpmann's First Ballet

That Helpmann was approaching choreography with a fresh and unfettered outlook was apparent from the first moments of *Comus*. The dance of the Attendant Spirit has the effect of an animated statue, the sculptural poses held and then merging one from another. Based on the classical technique, like all the dancing in Helpmann's ballets, it demands unusual poise and balance in the dancer, which Margaret Dale beautifully gave it. Throughout the ballet one is conscious of the graphic movement of the arms which in Helpmann's choreography is as important as that of the feet. I know of no other choreographer of whom this is true in quite as individual a degree. The Attendant Spirit leading the brothers to their lost sister, the movements of searching, innocence and fear in the dance of the Lady, the parallel lunge of swords, arms and feet in the brothers' *pas de deux*, the variations of a swimming stroke in the dances of Sabrina the river nymph—these are not only lovely in themselves, they illustrate both action and character. In his handling of the Rout Helpmann shows less control, though their shoulder movements, tendency to form a circle (vaguely suggesting black magic) and grotesquerie are effective. The corps de ballet is better used at the entrance of Sabrina's nymphs, their curving, wave-like movements suggesting the river's flow, and the pyramidal grouping of the finale is striking. (Massine's use of the pyramid in *Seventh Symphony* does not, of course, mean that Helpmann is here derivative. All choreographers, to some

extent, use similar patterns and steps but stamped with their own personality.) The ballet beautifully illustrates the story and Purcell's music, and would still hold together without Helpmann's superb insolence, like an evil flame, in the part of Comus.

The " Hamlet " Quibble

Turning to what a wit has called *Helplet* or *Hammann*, we are faced with the parrot cry that also greeted *Job*—" This is not a ballet!" This is just quibbling. By the three-act formula *Hamlet* is not a play. " Choreography " is more than the arrangement of dance-steps; a choreographer is judged by the composition as a whole, which includes also mime, general pattern, grouping and musical understanding. Mime is a perfectly legitimate element in ballet. It figures in classical works (notably *Giselle*) as well as in dramatic ballets such as *Scheherazade, Job* and *Hamlet;* in which the dividing line between mime and dance is inevitably less marked. To treat *Hamlet* in terms of multiple *fouettés* would ruin it artistically; but if dramatic themes are to be excluded on this account ballet will become dangerously limited in scope. A narrow art stagnates—the young creator *must* be given his head. At a time when third-rate companies are turning out so many repetitive and formless ballets it is essential that as vital and original a work as *Hamlet* is given its due, and the choreographer of mind and imagination full freedom of expression.

Imaginative Choreography

Hamlet is a ballet, and a fine one—mime and dance so smoothly blended that one is hardly conscious where one ends and the other begins, and both perfectly matching theme and music. The *emotional* content of the music Helpmann has vividly expressed throughout, synchronising the dramatic and musical climaxes with an exciting sense of timing. Some of the choreography is particularly imaginative—Ophelia's madness, her linked fingers and movement of arms and shoulders poignantly expressing her wandering mind and the plaintive phrases of the wood-wind; Hamlet's terrific crawl forward to the footlights, his hands pounding the floor; the tender and beautifully devised *pas de deux* with Ophelia; the passing and repassing of the Queen and Ophelia, the two merged in Hamlet's confused consciousness; Hamlet's series of arrested turns *posés*, hands blindly to forehead, the pose magnificently synchronising with the drum-beat. Helpmann has welded his corps de ballet into patterns of moving diagonal lines which cleverly sustain the flow of action. He also gives them character—their sweeping bowing suggests the treacherous servility that dogged Hamlet about the Court. Their parallel lines excitingly build up the entrances and exits of the principals, and they also underline the emotion, anticipate or echo the action of the principals, with a kind of dream quality (*e.g.*, the linked couples circling off stage before the Queen and Ophelia do the same). One gets the effect of a reflection repeated indefinitely in a mirror.

This sense of the disturbed outline of a dream is imaginatively sustained throughout—Hamlet seems, at times, outside the action, an invisible spectator. The King and Queen make love over and around him, in the Play Scene; Ophelia's bier is swept out by the bearers over his very head. Helpmann's choice of theme—" And in that sleep of death what dreams may come "—of course cuts the ground beneath the feet of his Shakespearean critics; the whole thing, a vision of the dying Hamlet, allows the choreographer freedom of invention. Yet the ballet does, psychologically, illumine the play with remarkable subtlety. One might protest the emphasis is overmacabre, the omission of Horatio obscures the " sweet Prince "; but Hamlet's was a lonely mind, and in this friendless Prince the loneliness is terribly emphasised. The *pas de deux* with Ophelia, too, delicately suggests Hamlet's frustrated tenderness. The confused interchange of Ophelia and the Queen sharply brings out the way in which Hamlet's feeling for Ophelia is poisoned by his disillusion with his mother. One may disagree, from the text, with the inclusion of the Oedipus complex, but balletically Helpmann has suggested it with extraordinary insight. This nightmare emphasis on the subconscious suggests infinite choreographic possibilities; it is, in fact, the most interesting and revealing aspect of the ballet. (Celia Franca's vivid and lovely Queen helps here.) The Gravedigger-Yorick character is brilliantly used to point Hamlet's morbid obsession with mortality; his rolling of the skull, and macabre return at Hamlet's death, are fine touches. There are superb details—Hamlet sensing the Ghost's presence and being drawn backwards to him by a kind of reluctant fascination; the Ghost pouring his tale into Hamlet's ear as Claudius poured the poison into his own; Hamlet's comparison of the hands of Ophelia and the Queen, inextricably confused in his brain. But Helpmann's inexhaustible subtlety can only be fully appreciated after several visits. There is not a movement in the ballet without significance. The false touches—there are very few—are false only to the Shakespearean purist and never to the atmosphere of the ballet as conceived.

An Artistic Whole

Helpmann's Hamlet has one unforgettable moment—the expression of his face when the Queen kisses him before the duel. Its sense of fleeting peace, a rest from turmoil, is deeply moving: one glimpses the real Hamlet in his terrible isolation and need for

(Continued on page 22)

The Play Scene from the ballet *Hamlet*, in which the Ghost appears as the Player King and Ophelia as the Player Queen. This picture gives an idea of Leslie Hurry's impressive décor.

John Hart as Laertes and Margot Fonteyn as Ophelia in a scene with Helpmann.

Another glimpse of the ballet showing the King (David Paltenghi), Laertes and Hamlet.

The dreamlike quality of Helpmann's conception is well-illustrated in this scene in which Hamlet compares the hands of Ophelia and those of the Queen, his mother (Celia Franca), who are inextricably confused in his brain

affection. His performance, it goes without saying, has imagination, suffering, and a striking mobility of face and hands; but a mere "exploitation of the particular talents of an individual dancer" the ballet certainly is not. It is a complete entity in which music, dramatic action, dancing and décor all cohere. Leslie Hurry's décor is really exciting and the choice of this young artist shows great perspicacity on somebody's part, presumably Helpmann's. Each of Helpmann's ballets has been an artistic whole—Messel's designs for *Comus* were ravishingly lovely—and he apparently has the perfect mental equipment for a choreographer, which includes a sensitive understanding of music and painting as well as the traditions of the dance. One looks forward to his next work, which may mark an important step in the art of ballet.

Slave to a Reputation

by Eric Johns

STARDOM is a full-time job, day and night, on and off-stage. Like the traditional housewife's duties, the star's work is never finished.

When she takes her final call as the curtain sweeps down for the last time, you playgoers fondly imagine her to be a free woman until the following evening when she presents herself at the theatre for the next performance.

Yet how disappointed you would be if she took that point of view and failed you by refusing to play the part of the famous actress off-stage! If she lived in complete seclusion between one performance and another, even refusing to permit a word about her private life to appear in print, you would have no time for her, since you are hard taskmasters as far as your players are concerned. By the cunning device of ostracism, you would strip stardom's laurels from her brow and cause her to sink back into the nameless ranks of small part players from which she originally emerged.

The Star's Bread and Butter

The star is ever conscious of her reputation. The fact that she guards it jealously and even zealously is not a mark of stupid vanity, but one of decided sanity. It is her bread and butter and she is fully aware that you will be first to penalise her if she fails to live up to your expectations.

Maintaining a reputation hampers one's activities and drains one's purse. Far from being a free woman, the star at the zenith of her popularity is a fettered public servant whose liberty is governed to a large extent by public opinion.

Marion Lorne once flopped her hat foolishly on top of her head and turning to me, said, "This is how I'd like to walk down Piccadilly. This is the real me! But with a reputation to consider I have to sit in front of a mirror and twist and tilt it into some semblance of a fashionable angle!"

You expect a star, even in her private life, to live up to certain standards. If she fails you cease to regard her as an object of hero worship and her box office appeal slumps with disastrous effects.

You expect to see her riding in a taxi, but never in a bus or on the Underground. You would be horrified to see her drinking morning coffee at a tile-topped teashop table in company with the bowler-hatted "regulars," browsing over "The Financial Times." You demand that she eats at the most exclusive restaurants where the house charges are far more costly than the meal.

If you saw her relishing a plate of chips in a sawdust saloon you would simply despise her. She is expected to toy with a portion of unappetising caviare in a sophisticated setting that might attract a photographer intent on getting her picture into the Society magazines—a picture "with friend," as the man who pays for the meal is usually dubbed in the caption.

You could never stomach a star who lived next door to you. A goodly portion of her astronomical income must be devoted to the acquisition of an exclusive address with a Mayfair, Sloane, or Grosvenor telephone number. She could live just as comfortably at a quarter the cost in Tooting, Acton, or Islington, but her prestige could never hope to survive in so remote a district. She might just as well choose the Australian Bush.

Fashionable at All Costs

You expect your star to be a leader of fashion. She cannot afford to be seen too often in the same clothes, even in these days of rationing. No badly dressed woman has touched even the fringe of stardom. Managers would never give her the chance, for those unimaginative gentlemen seem to

think that a woman who fails to look smart when invited to lunch just lacks the flair for wearing clothes and would still look a frump even in the hands of a Hartnell or a Schiaparelli. No actress dare risk causing such a thought to cross the managerial mind. She must dress well at all costs, even if her last penny goes on her back.

In your gossip columns you expect to read that your star has attended a ball in Park Lane, a cocktail party in Curzon Street and all the more snobbish charity events. In the good old days of foreign travel you were disappointed if you failed to find pictures of her at the Lido, St. Moritz or Monte Carlo at the time of year when "the right people" were there. A holiday in a Margate boarding house would shake the firmest reputation to the very roots of its foundations.

Hair Styles and Portraits

You expect new photographs of her to appear at frequent intervals. Constant visits to the photographer mean constant changes of hair style. Being seen in the right places in company with the right people means that her complexion has to be flawless, entailing long sessions in the beauty parlour. The annual cost of maintaining a star's coiffure and complexion would keep an average middle class family in comfort for a year or two. Once more, the star cannot be accused of vanity. You playgoers are first to point the accusing finger at a scaly skin or a greying curl. To you it signifies an artist is "getting on" and that the days of her reign are numbered.

A petty entourage of maid, dresser, and part-time secretary helps to consume that salary which looks so colossal when first published in the press. If the actress happens to be a married woman with a child a nursemaid is most essential, as fans would raise their hands in horror at the sight of their own pet star wheeling a slobbering infant in the park. "So degrading, my dear. Even Mrs. Tomkins has a girl to take the child out!"

"Going Places"

The star dare not be caught at a disadvantage. She is compelled to "go places" where she can be seen by the people who matter in her career and where gossip writers get an opportunity of keeping her name before the public, even when she is not actually playing.

In rare cases stardom may be won overnight, but in every case the price of maintaining it, once the artist's debut has ceased to be news value, is an expensive and exhausting business. The public who pay the piper expect much for their money before, during, and after the show. If the star fails to take her off-stage public seriously and commits what they consider a faux pas she is in danger of alienating their affections for all time, thereby robbing her reputation of all its commercial value.

Esmond Knight Plays Nazi Screen Villain

ESMOND KNIGHT'S courageous determination to continue his career as an actor, despite the handicap of blindness inflicted upon him during the momentous Battle of the Bismarck, is being gloriously rewarded.

He is carrying all before him on the floor of the Denham Film Studios where he is playing a Nazi villain of the most despicable hue in a film entitled, *The Silver Fleet*. Complete with shaven head and characteristic eye glass, and describing himself as "a rather unglorified mixture of Erich von Stroheim and Lon Chaney," Esmond looks the part to perfection.

Playgoers who saw his breath-taking performance as the Chief Engineer of the Arts in *The Insect Play* a couple of years before the war will know that apart from being able to look like an inhuman tyrant, Esmond can assume the Prussian manner to perfection.

He learned a good deal about German temperament, character, and customs during the summer of 1935, while living in Berlin for the making of the film, *Black Roses*, in which he played opposite Lilian Harvey.

Having scored such success at the microphone, and now before the movie camera, this young actor's return to the footlights is awaited with even keener interest.

The Theatre in Russia

HERBERT MARSHALL, the well-known theatre producer, has contributed an illuminating article entitled "Various Aspects of Soviet Culture" in *Soviet Literature, Art, Music* (*To-day's Booklets*, edited by M. Grindea, 1/3). Particularly interesting are his references to Shakespearean productions in the Soviet. In Moscow alone it is quite usual for no less than eight of Shakespeare's plays to be running at the same time, and public discussion on these productions are commonplace.

This booklet, which also contains many interesting extracts in translation of Russian literature, should be on the bookshelves of all who seek to understand our brave ally.

James Cagney as George M. Cohan in a scene from the Warner Bros. film *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, reviewed below.

Echoes from Broadway

TWO of the finest shows seen on Broadway in years are by strange coincidence playing side by side: Warner Brothers film based on the life of George M. Cohan, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, at the Hollywood Theatre, and Irving Berlin's *This is the Army*, a new soldier show for the benefit of Army Emergency Relief, presented by Uncle Sam, with a cast comprised of 300 soldiers, at the Broadway Theatre.

Yankee Doodle Dandy was given a spectacular premiere, admission by War Bonds only at $25 to $25,000 per seat, which patriotic gesture brought in over five million dollars. It is gratifying to be able to report that *Yankee Doodle Dandy* is worthy in every way of this grand opening night tribute bestowed upon it.

We doubt if the name George M. Cohan means very much to the average filmgoer in England, but since Mr. Cohan is played by James Cagney, and Cagney has never before been seen so elegantly in his element, this film should prove to be a terrific success anywhere.

George M. Cohan, now in his 64th year, is known to Broadway as the original song-and-dance man. The story starts where he is trouping with his mother, father and sister, billed as The Four Cohans, and appearing in *Peck's Bad Boy*. Through the years of success that follow, despite his assured and arrogant manner, Mr. Cohan retains a genuinely touching and sincere affection for his family. He writes, produces and stars in his own shows, some straight, some musical. In the prologue we go back to the opening night of *I'd Rather be Right*, the political satire written by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, with music and lyrics by Rodgers and Hart, in which Broadway hit Mr. Cohan played Franklin D. Roosevelt. This was one of the few shows in which he appeared that he did not write, and his old producing partner, the late Sam H. Harris, presented him in it. He also made a big success in the Theatre Guild's original production of Eugene O'Niel's *Ah, Wilderness*! In the film we see Mr. Cohan being handed a telegram from President Roosevelt, summoning him to Washington. Believing his portrayal of President Roosevelt in *I'd Rather be Right* has put him on the White House carpet, he makes the trip filled with apprehension. When he arrives, the President presents him with the Congressional Medal of Honor, as composer of "Over There" and "You're a Grand Old Flag," two stirring contributions of American patriotism. This, of course, is based on fact. But for the film, Mr. Cohan sits down and tells the President, in flashback, the story of his life.

Robert Buckner and Edmund Joseph are given credit for the screen play, and Michael Curtiz the direction. It is a reasonably accurate account of Mr. Cohan's colourful Broadway career. It has been buoyantly

By our American Correspondent **E. MAWBY GREEN**

(*Left*): "The Stage Door Canteen" number and (*right*) Sgt. Ezra Stone, Pte. Tileston Perry (as Lynn Fontanne) and Pte. Richard Manson (as Jane Cowl) in *This is the Army*.

written, acted and directed, never allowed to become dull, and provides some memorable film moments. You will be shamed to choking over the sentimental passages and perceptibly amused by the comedy highlight.

The reproduction of scenes from some of Mr. Cohan's early stage encounters are especially entertaining: "Yankee Doodle Boy" and "Give My Regards to Broadway" from his musical *Little Johnny Jones;* and Irene Manning's playing of Fay Templeton and singing of "Mary is a Grand Old Name" and "So Long Mary," really do things to you. "You're a Grand Old Flag" is unfurled across the screen in an attack of flag-waving that completely overcomes your resistance and the urge to cheer is extremely difficult to suppress. You will also like the episode where Mr. Cohan puts together his composition "Over There," the song favourite of the last war. It would be hard to find a more stirring note at this time. England should be greatly encouraged and overjoyed when they see these thousands of Yanks embarking for overseas, as their voices fade out . . . "And We Won't Come Back, 'til its Over, Over There."

Included in the splendid cast are Walter Huston, Joan Lesle, Richard Wharf, George Tobais, Rosemary deCamp, Jeanne Cagney, Frances Langford, George Barbier, S. Z. Sakall, Walter Catlett and Eddie Foy, Jr. James Cagney has not only captured many of the mannerisms peculiar to Mr. Cohan, but manages at times actually to look a great deal like him. This is unquestionably Cagney's crack cinema achievement, and you will be astounded by his agility in the dancing sequences.

Yankee Doodle Dandy is a great picture, about a great personality, played by a great performer. George M. Cohan did not hit it off in Hollywood, so not to be daunted, Hollywood has taken his life and made a hit out of that. Some ten or twelve years ago he appeared in *The Phantom President*, with Claudette Colbert. Remember this film?

* * * *

HAVING expended so much enthusiasm on *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, it is difficult to know where to start in on Irving Berlin's *This is the Army*, which, as stage musicals go, is in a class entirely its own.

The seats for the premiere fetched as high as $1,000, and Kate Smith graciously paid $10,000 for a pair, so altogether approximately $50,000 was taken for the grand opening performance.

Apparently, during the last world war Mr. Berlin put on a similar show to *This is the Army*; called *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*, which introduced the two well-known songs: "Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning" and "Mandy," both numbers are incorporated in *This is the Army*, as well as Mr. Berlin and a row of nimble rookies resurrected from the lines of *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*.

We have had a lot of musical shows on Broadway during the past few years, but for precision, performance, originality and general appeal *This is the Army* outflanks them all. Everybody connected with the production belongs to the U.S. Army—

performers, musicians, stagehands and general personnel—and rehearsals were sandwiched in between drill and other army chores. All of which makes you wonder even more how so finished and fine a show could have been accomplished so magnificently. This brings us back to Irving Berlin. There has been talk from time to time that Mr. Berlin would be back on Broadway with the words and music for another revue. It is practically ten years since he turned up with those top tunes for the unforgettable *As Thousands Cheer,* so it has actually taken a war and the army to do the trick. Mr. Berlin spent several months in the various camps training available talent for *This is the Army,* and the quality of the performers unearthed has amazed everybody. Broadway producers in normal conditions have their choice of the song-and-dance field, but even then they complain of a talent shortage. In future they will have to think of a better excuse for putting on a mediocre musical. *This is the Army* has not just one singer to put over the songs, but a sweet and solid half dozen, each far above Broadway average. The comedy, dancing and speciality acts are just as elaborately provided for, and the originality of the dances and costumes is something else that some of the Broadway producers might look into.

It has always been this writer's contention that a consistently tuneful score, properly interpreted, is half the battle of a musical show. Mr. Berlin has taken excellent care to see that all his musical numbers come over and offer production scope, and in addition tapped out from his special tune-box a couple of haunting hits to hum on the way out: "I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen" and "I'm Getting Tired so I can Sleep."

Of the production numbers: we remember best, "That Russian Winter," "Aryans Under the Skin," "What the Well Dressed Man in Harlem Will Wear" (coloured contingency), "Head in the Clouds" (air force) and the first act finale turned nautical in a fine tribute to the Navy. The most successful of the sketches is "Stage Door Canteen," wherein we get some marvellous impersonations of Jane Cowl, Lynn Fontanne, Gypsy (strip teese) Rose Lee, Vera Zorina, Alfred Lunt and Noel Coward. The "ladies" of the chorus and ballet have been expertly chosen, being neither embarrassingly feminine nor ridiculously masculine, and occasionally a pair of legs emerge with more beauty than bone. . . . So the absence of girls in this all stage show really doesn't bother you one little bit.

* * *

ONE of the most striking features of *This is the Army* is that it makes no attempt to plague you with propaganda. The emphasis is definitely on entertainment, and the sight of the stage loaded with over two hundred shining faces in uniform is enough in itself to pep up anybody's flagging patriotism. It is impossible to describe the spirit of goodwill that pushes itself over the footlights and shoots up your morale.

Of course, the show is a smash hit, and is playing to something like $45,000 a week, practically all profit for the Army Emergency Relief. Mr. Berlin is turning over all his royalties derived from the show, too. After the limited New York run, a road tour is planned, extending to the coast. After that we must wait and see, but there is a vague rumour afloat that the entire show may be taken by bombers to England for a London engagement. That would be London's biggest and most exciting direct hit of the war! Meanwhile, Warner Bros. have bought the movie rights with a down payment of $250,000, plus a share of the film profits. After seeing Warner's splendid treatment of *Yankee Doodle Dandy,* we feel confident *This is the Army* will be brought to the screen with equal magnificence.

* * *

WE do not know whether the late George Gershwin's score for *Porgy and Bess* is widely played in England or not. Since his death five years ago, this music has been heard over the radio constantly, and we have been privileged to hear many brilliant interpretations by prominent orchestra leaders. When the Theatre Guild produced the original *Porgy and Bess* in 1935, Mr. Gershwin did all his own musical arrangements. At that time we felt his score was over-orchestrated and the real beauty of some of the numbers got lost in the orchestra pit. The Theatre Guild gave this opera an excellent production, but due chiefly to high operating costs, *Porgy and Bess* never had a chance to become a success and closed after seventy-three performances. Since then the score has become so popular with music lovers that when Cheryl Crawford staged a revival last summer at Maplewood, New Jersey, everybody just flocked to see it. She spent several months polishing and tightening up the production,

Echoes from Broadway *(Con'd)*

and in January installed this revival at the larger Majestic Theatre at reasonable prices, where it is still running and is recognised as one of the few completely happy events of the past season.

Fortunately, many of the Guild's original cast were still available, in particular, Todd Duncan for Porgy, the crippled beggar of Catfish Row, and Anne Brown for Bess, Porgy's woman who tries to do right by Porgy but fails. Their interpretation of the Gershwin score is beautiful and moving: "I Got Plenty o'Nuttin'," "Bess, You is My Woman Now," and "I Loves You Porgy." But the whole coloured cast is excellent, especially in the choral numbers. Harriett Jackson is the Clara for "Summer Time"; Edward Matthews the Jake for "A Woman Is a Sometime Thing"; Avon Long for Sportin' Life's "It Ain't Necessarily So," and Ruby Elzy for Serena.

Robert Ross's staging is another high spot in the production as is Alexander Smallens conducting of the orchestra.

Porgy and Bess is, of course, based on the play *Porgy*, by Dubose and Dorothy Heyward, and Dubose Heyward and Ira Gershwin supplied the lyrics to the George Gershwin music. Some years ago, Cheryl Crawford took *Porgy* over to London. Those who saw *Porgy* never forgot it. It would be marvellous if Miss Crawford could be persuaded to give *Porgy and Bess* another chance in London, too, after America is through with it, which from present indications won't be for some time to come.

* * * *

WE have been hoping, with the passing of time, our reaction to Vinton Freedley's hit musical production *Let's Face It*, which stars the sensational Danny Kaye, would turn like the worm and it would be less difficult to wriggle in something nice about it. Now that *Let's Face It* is due in the West End, we are more or less on the spot, and we feel something should be said about the original New York production, which has already played eight months and is making another fortune for Mr. Freedley, who has amazing luck with his musicals but no luck at all with straight plays.

Without Danny Kaye, we doubt if *Let's Face It* would have survived so successfully. This Kaye guy achieved overnight acclaim after the opening of *Lady in the Dark*, with Gertrude Lawrence, and left the latter show to be starred in *Let's Face It*. We do not think he is nearly as funny in *Let's Face It*, because he is not given the opportunity,

DANNY KAYE

brilliant star of *Let's Face It*, American musical success, due for production over here, with Bobby Howes in the lead.

perhaps. He wakes up the house with two numbers: "A Fairy Tale" and "Melody in Four F," by Sylvia Fine (his wife) and Max Liesman, otherwise there is little else in *Let's Face It* that registers. The book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields, based on an old play *Cradle Snatchers*, is incredibly dull and old-fashioned, despite the efforts of the delightful and capable Eve Arden, Mary Jane Walsh, Vivian Vance and Edith Meiser to make it appear otherwise. With the exception of "Ev'rything I Love," we thought the Cole Porter songs just cold Porter. The costumes and dances lacked all signs of originality, and my companion of the evening remarked: This is what I would expect of a London musical. To which we replied, that even in war-time, London musicals managed to do better than that, and we'd just hate any London theatregoer to see *Let's Face It* and take it as being the regular standard of hit Broadway musicals.

Luckily, musicals can be stretched to suit personalities, and the *Let's Face It* London sees with Bobby Howes will doubtless be something entirely different and really worth the price of admission. It has a soldier theme and Paramount has paid a fancy figure for the movie rights. This wizard of wonder Danny Kaye is making a musical for Samuel Goldwyn, so you over there will eventually have an opportunity of seeing the hit sensation of Broadway's *Let's Face It*, as well as Bobby Howes in what will probably be a hit production of *Let's Face It*.

Save Your Waste Paper — and help the War Effort

"Twelfth Night" as Ballet

Scenes by Tunbridge-Sedgwick

Andree Howard's eloquent choreography has a delightful background with Doris Zinkeisen's lovely early Renaissance décor in the International Ballet's production of *Twelfth Night*.

Raymond Farrell as Orsino bids Mona Inglesby as Viola carry his message of love to Olivia.

Nina Tarakanova makes a mischievous Maria to Leslie French's Feste.

THE International Ballet, which had such a successful season at the Lyric Theatre last year, is to return to the West End at His Majesty's Theatre, on September 2nd, for a five weeks' season. They will present *Twelfth Night*, the first two-act ballet ever to have been conceived and to have its premiere in this country. This ballet was devised and produced by Mona Inglesby, 24 year old ballerina who directs the company. The music is from Grieg, and the choreography is by Andree Howard. Doris Zinkeisen designed the colourful early Renaissance setting. Mona Inglesby dances Viola, Nina Tarakanova dances Maria, and Leslie French, well-known Shakespearean actor, will be seen as Feste, and will sing the famous songs. Harold Turner is the principal male dancer.

On Wednesday, September 9th, International Ballet will present a new production of *Giselle*, reproduced by Sergueff, choreography by Coralli, music by Adam. The company's repertoire will include *Swan Lake, Les Sylphides, Fete Boheme*, dances from *Aurora's Wedding* and *Prince Igor*, Fokine's delightful ballet *Carnival* so rarely given in this country, and the three ballets by Mona Inglesby *Amoras, Endymion* and *Planetomania*.

Ray Barcia's Star Horoscope

Ray Barcia

★

Below is Miss Barcia's general horoscope for readers, and a special reading featuring Emile Littler, the well-known theatrical producer. Miss Barcia is, of course, a member of 'The Dancing Years' company.

IF your birthday is between August 23rd and September 23rd (approximately) you have a strong influence of the sign Virgo, the Maiden, the symbol of chastity and restraint. Owing to your capacity for withdrawal and your self-control you are difficult for other people to understand and you should always try to explain yourself if you want their affection. They cannot see things which are obvious to you. You possess a marvellous ingenuity and love to exercise your wits, but privately; you spend much energy in day-dreaming and scheming.

Mercury exercises influence upon you but does not urge you to speech and expression as it does the Geminians. Your shyness and receptiveness incline you to shrink from contacts and fastidiousness alienates you from the world; this again may bring nervous and psychic troubles in some cases. Anyway you carry a reputation for being orderly, workmanlike, systematic and discriminative.

The sign gives tremendous talent for art, music and literature to its natives but they need encouragement and help to bolster them and their ambition is not strong. Their health also is delicate but assisted by a natural interest in diet and hygiene and the careful living instinctive to the sign. These people have no difficulty in keeping afloat in material matters as Mercury gives so much good sense but they need to increase and nourish their contacts with the world around them. They need the warmth and stimulus of other signs and therefore should guard against cutting themselves off. They have to make allowances for the roughness and violence around them and steel themselves against shocks as only thus can they establish relationships and gain a true understanding. In turn, the more boisterous signs should be gentle with the sensitive Virginians and make great efforts to avoid frightening or bullying them in any way. They have much to give and are worth drawing out.

★ Emile Littler

WITH Leo rising and the Sun in Virgo this horoscope shows balance between spiritual and material influences. The native will be beset by no conflicting motives; his reactions to life and his pathway through it will be characterised by an unusual degree of poise. The mind over-rules all and is clear and concrete with facile power of reasoning and a strong theatre sense. Critical and discriminative, Leo prevents any tendency to become carping and demonstrates a business temperament brought successfully to deal with temperaments of the theatre. Sometimes finding it difficult to express all that he perceives, foreign to him to enforce discipline it is likely that best results will be obtained in partnership and he will be blessed with trustworthy and reliable workers. There is a calm control, but on occasions when driven to it, a fiery temper!

One would expect signs of eminence in theatrical ventures from Mr. Littler's horoscope and here astrology does not fail, for the theatre is ruled by the fifth house of the horoscope and is inhabited in his case by Mars and Uranus with a harmonious aspect from Jupiter. These are signs of exceptional originality, enterprise and fortune. He may launch into ventures from which the more cautious would shrink and triumphantly bring them to a successful financial result.

This fount of energy when once brought to bear upon an effort will gain impetus and carry both him and other people upon its course, a motive power capable of firing the most inert. There is no lack of commonsense with regard to money and yet a willingness to be lavish where advertisement and sporting chances are concerned. In fact the influences for speculation not only in the theatre but in sport and property are propitious.

It goes without saying that attraction for the opposite sex is strong and plays a large part in the life.

Mr. Littler having so impulsive a fund of energy should beware of overtaxing his strength, both physical and nervous, as the position of his Sun does not promise the amount of vitality usual to a Leo person.

Notes and Topics

AMATEUR STAGE

AN interesting letter from Haywards Heath reports the preparation of a production of the musical *For the Love of Mike*, to be given by the local A.R.P. personnel. The performances take place on September 16-19 and Mr. Jimmie Leslie (Jnr.), who is producing, writes: "We feel that this production is of interest as the piece is very suitable these days for amateur groups, A.R.P. units, etc., where cast limitations are so pronounced. As you will recall, *For the Love of Mike* was one of the intimate musical shows produced at the Saville Theatre, and requires only a small cast, no chorus, and has one setting throughout, points which certainly commend it in these days.

"It can also be produced on a small stage (one of our handicaps). Special scenery and furniture is being built for our production by A.R.P. members, whose numbers include professional carpenters, a scenic artist and an electrician. If any London A.R.P. or other amateur units are interested we shall be very pleased to welcome them (45 minutes express train journey). But prior notification of their arrival is advisable, as we booked out solid for our last two productions, a pantomime and a revue."

MR. EMLYN WILLIAMS gave special permission to the "S" Squadron of the R.A.F. at Southampton to perform *Night Must Fall* in aid of the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund. It was given entirely by R.A.F. and W.A.A.F. personnel, many of whom had not appeared on the stage before. Mr. Stanley Vane, the producer, now in the R.A.F., directed many plays for Southampton Repertory Players in pre-war days, and hopes to have further production experience with the R.A.F.

The Taverners this summer have had a successful tour of London districts with *Doctor Knock*, using Granville-Baker's translation of Romain's comedy. Their performances included one at the West Ham Open-air Theatre, and some in connection with the Holidays at Home Scheme. This play is a very refreshing change from the average amateur fare. It requires a good male lead for the title part, with scope for excellent small character parts. The Taverners offered some choice pieces of acting, and are fortunate in their resources. But with war-time changes, a producer never knows from one week to another how long his good fortune will last.

And So It Goes On, described as "an extravaganza," by Violet Rutter, has been published by H. F. W. Deane & Sons, at one shilling. It requires a cast of eight women, and depicts the continuance of war conditions in 1999.

Toynbee Hall Winter Drama Festival

MR. JOHN BURRELL, Chairman for the Festival Committee, writes: "We were gratified by the results of the Festival last winter: the standard of proficiency achieved by the eighteen participating groups in circumstances of exceptional difficulty was considered very creditable by adjudicators

TOYNBEE HALL THEATRE

WINTER DRAMA FESTIVAL

For full particulars and entry form apply to the **FESTIVAL SECRETARY, TOYNBEE HALL, ALDGATE, E.1.**

The Festival, which is open to any Group of Amateur Players, will commence in October.

There is no entrance fee, and all authors' royalties will be paid by the Festival Committee.

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WANTED KNOWN.—Congenial Friendships are quickly formed through the U.C.C. For particulars, write Secretary, T.W., 5, Hay Street, Braughing, Herts. Est. in 1905.

and audiences alike, and the spirit of high artistic endeavour was admirably manifest.

"From the experience then gained we are proposing to make two changes in our Festival conditions, and to organise two Winter Festivals during the coming winter—one to open in October and to run for about six Saturday afternoon sessions, each consisting of three performances followed by an appraisement of the work of the producers and players by a leading member of the theatrical profession; the second which will be on similar lines to open early in the New Year. The climax of each of these two Festivals will consist of repeat performances by the three most successful groups which will be followed by a public commentary by an eminent dramatic critic.

"The two alterations which have been made in the Festival arrangements are that *it will be open to any group of amateur players, irrespective of its origin, to participate;* and that instead of a flat rate of 1/- there will be two charges for admission to each session: 2/- and 1/-. Otherwise the general conditions remain as before."

All groups interested in the proposed Festivals should apply as soon as possible to the Theatre Manager, Toynbee Hall, Aldgate, E.1, for copies of the Entry Form, and should indicate the approximate date at which their productions will be available for inclusion in the Festival.

The Viking Players

IN November last a munitions factory in the north started a dramatic society which was named The Viking Players. It may be of interest to other similar concerns to record what has been done in a short time to stimulate interest in drama and at the same time provide healthy intelligent relaxation for the workers.

The first event organised was a presentation of *Hay Fever* by The Accrington Arts Club. This effectively demonstrated the high quality of performance which could be given by amateurs.

At a general meeting of the factory workers, a few days later, the local C.E.M.A. organiser convinced them that if they made the necessary effort they could do similar plays on their own account.

Spurred on by a few enthusiasts The Viking Players first produced a play reading of Edward Wooll's *Libel.* This was made as effective as possible with costumes and improvised setting. It was so much appre-

ciated that it was eventually turned into a full production. Faults were inevitable in a company composed almost entirely of beginners, but it was much appreciated by the audience and the company were asked to give public performances in two adjacent towns.

Up to date the Society have presented, in addition, *The Case of the Frightened Lady* by Edgar Wallace, *Quiet Wedding* by Esther McCracken and a programme of one act plays. Both full length plays now have touring engagements in other local centres.

Production is in the hands of Daniel Wray and Harwood Leyland, both on the staff of the munitions factory from which all the actors are drawn.

Generous help is freely given by various old established amateur dramatic societies who pay visits from time to time with their current productions.

To carry the objects of the Society still further, trips are organised to visit the Old Vic Company when they appear in the locality.

Although financial profits are not the object it is worth mentioning that The Viking Players have more than paid their way.

They have every encouragement from an enlightened factory management who appreciate that intellectual stimulation helps production. This being the case, activities will be continued and intensified.

THEATRE CROSSWORD - - - - by H. C. G. STEVENS

At the special request of several readers, THEATRE WORLD prints another crossword. All the forty-six clues have some bearing on the entertainment world. A prize of two stalls tickets for a current West End play will go to each of the senders of the first three correct solutions opened on September 15th. Address: "Crossword," THEATRE WORLD, 1, Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, E.C.4. The solution will be published in the October issue.

(SPECIAL NOTE.—As so many readers file their copies of "THEATRE WORLD," an entry need not necessarily be sent in on the page itself; it may be written on a sheet of notepaper, the solutions in two columns—the "across" on the left, the "down" on the right.)

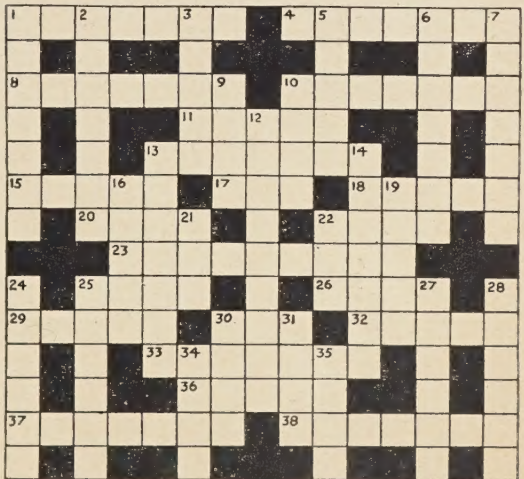
CLUES

Across

1. What pros. do to live, of course (7)
4. This one begins a tale-book, look you (7)
8. Frequent stage direction in a Masefield play (Royalty, 1908) (4; 3)
10. Might describe the personality of some lively circus midget named Dinah (7)
11. Short for copy (5)
13. Obvious condition of him who 19 (7)
15. Attack-sounding whereabouts of working film actor (2; 3)
17. Rather biting nickname for so popular a comedian (5)
18. Present-day state of Betty Frankiss when she's not off white (2; 3)
20. To make them, so many youths book for the front row (4)
22. The gamble-sounding job of the Second Robber (4)
23. Describes, say, George Jackley—but not his friend Charlie Naughton (4; 5)
25. "Is this the prologue, or the —of a ring?—*Hamlet* (4)
26. Thus the box-office, when the pencilled booking's matured (4)
29. "By Sinel's death I know I am —of Glamis"—*Macbeth* (5)
30. Remember, when 'phoning Golders Green Hippodrome (3, abbrev.)
32. Great actors get their heads turned to become great old Russians (5)
33. Get a car in half London with nothing on—to make that big suburban dance hall (7)
36. Published, in 1623, by Heming and Condell (5)
37. Was this manager educated at prep., Clifton? He's in it now, anyway (1; 1; 5)
38. Miss Courtneidge's? (7)
39. Not so, Mercia and Nora (7)
40. Where, curiously enough, the stagestruck look for a beginning (4; 3)

Down

1. Lancashire fav'ur about management of Edinburgh Lyceum (7)
2. Profitable state of Tessie O'Shea (7)
3. March in confusion for the actress if she wants to impress (5)



5. "And out — — she sees herself more proper"—As You Like It (2; 3)
6. Festival promoter in state of illumination (7)
7. Nove for the Linden Travers part (7)
9. Sign of happier first nights (4)
10. The act one conceals the company (4)
12. Often super—yet never (9)
13. Artist paints actress in position of comfort, it would seem (2; 5)
14. To this the tragedienne's handkerchief's mainly for (3, 4)
16. This well-known lyricist ends heavily (5)
19. Modern-day present act of stage flirt (5)
21. 'Christopher—" (New, 1921) (3)
22. Friend in "Camille" (3)
24. Old at Canterbury (7)
25. Many theatres not in the least royal (7)
27. *Chez* Henson (7)
28. Show girls should so stay (2; 5)
30. Last stage honour went to one (4)
31. It's Maschwitz, in the richer days (4)
34. Reasonable? Then the actor rarely refuses it (5)
35. Proverbially unpopular with bivalve molluscs; beloved of thriller "fans" (5)

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